

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

8/11/2023

VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

Mr. Andrew Morley
President and Chief Executive Officer
World Vision International

Dear Mr. Morley:

In 2020, I started an investigation into World Vision after allegations concerning a diversion of government funds to a terrorist-funding organization, the Islamic Relief Agency (ISRA).¹ The investigation found that World Vision had access to the appropriate public information and should have known how, but failed to, properly vet ISRA as a sub-grantee, resulting in the transfer of U.S. taxpayer dollars to an organization with an extensive history of supporting terrorist organizations and terrorists. Additionally, the investigation found that a more “robust and fundamentally sound system of screening and vetting is needed to restore the public’s trust” in World Vision.² Since then, a former employee of World Vision, Muhammad Halabi was tried and convicted of funneling up to \$50 million to the terrorist group Hamas.³ Halabi was working as the Gaza manager of operations for World Vision and had worked for the organization since 2005 when he was arrested and ultimately convicted.⁴

In 2016, World Vision said they would suspend their operations in Gaza in response to the Halabi arrest.⁵ They also explained that they would conduct a full investigation and audit of their Gaza operations.⁶ In 2021, World Vision publicly claimed that they had hired the law firm DLA Piper and the consulting firm, Deloitte to complete the audit.⁷ World Vision claimed the audit “found no evidence of diversion of funds and no material evidence that El Halabi was part

¹ Letter from Oversight and Investigations Unit, Fin. Comm. to Sen. Grassley, 2020-12-23 *World Vision Financial Transactions*, (Dec. 22, 2020), <https://www.finance.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Oversight,%2012-23-20,%20Memo%20on%20World%20Vision%20Investigation.pdf>.

² *Id.*

³ Shira Rubin, *Israel Sentences Gaza Aid Worker Convicted of Funding Hamas to 12 Years*, THE WASHINGTON POST, (Aug. 30, 2022), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/08/30/israel-gaza-halabi-world-vision/>.

⁴ Joe Dyke, *Has A Lone Palestinian Aid Worker Been Falsely Accused of the Biggest Aid Money Heist In History?*, THE GUARDIAN, (Aug. 19, 2021), <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/aug/19/aid-worker-mohammed-el-halabi-gaza-israel-trial-largest-theft-aid-money-history>.

⁵ *Update: Statement by World Vision International CEO In Wake of Staff Arrest*, WORLD VISION, (Aug. 8, 2016), <https://www.wvi.org/jerusalem-west-bank-gaza/pressrelease/update-statement-world-vision-international-ceo-wake-staff>.

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ The New Arab Staff, *Israel Extends Detention of World Vision Gaza Director After ‘Baseless’ Hamas-links Accusation*, THE NEW ARAB, (May 3, 2022), <https://www.newarab.com/news/israel-extends-detention-palestinian-aid-worker>.

of or working for Hamas”; however, the audit was never released to the public.⁸ In a 2022 World Vision report, they listed a budget of \$9.6 million for the “Jerusalem, West Bank, and Gaza” region without providing any additional information about the extent of their involvement in Gaza.⁹

World Vision continues to receive funding from the government through USAID and other agencies. In 2022, World Vision received \$491 million in “food, non-food commodities, and cash” from the U.S government.¹⁰ Additionally, World Vision is the “sixth largest implementor of USAID grants.”¹¹

Congress and the American people deserve transparency with respect to the steps World Vision has taken to ensure taxpayer money is used as intended and not for illegal activity. Please provide answers to the following questions by August 25, 2023.

1. Provide an unredacted copy of the audit.
2. With respect to taxpayer money received from USAID and other U.S. Government agencies, how much of it was stolen, embezzled or otherwise misappropriated by Muhammad Halabi?
3. What steps has World Vision taken to prevent any further money being sent to terrorist organizations? Provide all records.¹²
4. Has World Vision restarted Gaza operations and, if so, what steps is World Vision taking to ensure there is no influence on these operations from any terrorist organizations?
5. Did World Vision pay for any of Mohammad Halabi’s legal defense expenses? Were USAID funds or any other U.S. government funds involved in funding his defense? Provide all records.¹³
6. Provide a complete list of World Vision’s partner organizations around the world.

⁸ *World Vision Statement Regarding The Trial of Mohammad El Halabi*, WORLD VISION, (Dec. 18, 2020), <https://www.wvi.org/newsroom/jerusalem-west-bank-gaza/mohammad-el-halabi-trial-overview/world-vision-statement-regarding-trial-mohammad-el-halabi>.

⁹ *World Vision Report Jerusalem – West Bank – Gaza*, WORLD VISION, (Accessed July 10, 2023), <https://reliefweb.int/attachments/956821f7-aabe-4f6f-b77e-f9f40fa84ff6/World%20Vision%20Jerusalem%20-%20West%20Bank%20-%20Gaza%20-%20Our%20Programmes%20-%20June%202023.pdf>.

¹⁰ *Beauty Amid Pain, 2022 Annual Review*, WORLD VISION, (Accessed July 3, 2023), https://wvusstatic.com/2023/financial-accountability/BC18561_FY22_AR_F2.pdf.

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² “Records” include any written, recorded, or graphic material of any kind, including letters, memoranda, reports, notes, electronic data (e-mails, email attachments, and any other electronically created or stored information), calendar entries, inter-office communications, meeting minutes, phone/voice mail or recordings/records of verbal communications, and drafts (whether they resulted in final documents).

¹³ *Id.*

Mr. Andrew Morley

August 11, 2023

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Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter. Should you have any questions, please contact Julian Wilson on my committee staff at (202) 224-0642.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chuck Grassley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Charles E. Grassley
Ranking Member
Committee on the Budget